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Second Committee

Summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 24 September 2002, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Suazo ..... (Honduras)

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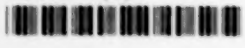

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Election of officers

1. *Mr. van der Pluijm (Belgium), Mr. Kára (Czech Republic) and Mr. Benmellouk (Morocco) were elected Vice-Chairmen and Mr. Al-Hadid (Jordan) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.*

Statement by the Chairman

2. **The Chairman** noted that economic and financial matters had figured prominently in the general debate in the plenary Assembly and that emphasis had been placed on the need to work creatively to find solutions to problems concerning the economic divide between an ever-richer North and an ever-poorer South. The need for consensus had also been stressed. The support of both the Secretary-General and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme in that connection was sincerely appreciated.

3. He informed the Committee that he had held informal talks with the main regional groups and with the Secretariat regarding the Committee's programme of work. He had also consulted the President of the General Assembly on how to improve the efficiency of the General Assembly's consideration of Second Committee reports. They had agreed that considering each resolution individually was a waste of resources and, consequently the possibility of considering all resolutions adopted by consensus as a package was being investigated.

4. Following the example set by the President of the General Assembly, meetings would begin punctually at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. If a speaker was absent, his or her delegation would automatically be placed last on the list of speakers.

5. During the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the Committee had used only 70.5 per cent of its allocated conference resources and had lost 32.3 hours owing to late starting and early adjournment of meetings. He hoped that the Committee would be able to improve on those statistics at the current session.

6. He proposed that speakers should be limited to 10 minutes for the general debate and 7 minutes for statements made under specific agenda items. Introductions by members of the Secretariat and representatives of agencies, funds and programmes would also be limited to 10 minutes and should focus on highlights and priorities; they should, if possible, be distributed in advance.

7. The Committee's agenda was based on clusters as laid down in General Assembly resolutions 52/12 B, 50/227 and 48/162. The proposed programme of work took into account the availability of reports and, as far as possible, the presence of high-level representatives of the Secretariat, agencies, funds and programmes.

8. As requested in resolution 50/227, resolutions would be shorter and, for issues of a procedural nature, decisions would be used instead of resolutions. Also in accordance with that resolution, the Committee would review the draft programme of work for the coming year at the end of the session, with a view to streamlining and simplifying reporting procedures. Deadlines for the submission of draft proposals would be strictly adhered to. Deadlines would be extended only in exceptional circumstances.

9. Following the successful practice of previous years, he intended to organize briefings by senior officials, panel discussions on agenda items and keynote addresses. He would consult with members of the Bureau regarding the agenda items to be considered, and would also welcome any suggestions from members of the Committee.

10. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the arrangements he had described were acceptable to the Committee.

11. *It was so decided.*

Organization of work (A/57/250 and A/C.2/57/L.1)

12. **The Chairman** drew attention to document A/C.2/57/L.1 and to the decisions taken by the General Assembly based on the recommendations contained in the first report of the General Committee (A/57/250) concerning the organization of work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. The target date for the conclusion of the Committee's work was Friday, 6 December 2002.

13. **Ms. Kelley** (Secretary of the Committee) drew attention to a number of proposed adjustments to the programme of work. If the Committee endorsed them, a revised programme of work would be issued.

14. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic), referring to procedural matters, said that, under General Assembly resolution 56/242, the Secretariat was

committed to providing interpretation for all meetings. All meetings held at Headquarters should be announced in the Journal. Lastly, with reference to the proposal that the General Assembly should adopt all Second Committee resolutions as one package, he pointed out that adopting resolutions individually made it easier to iron out possible mistakes in some of the non-English versions.

15. **The Chairman** said that it was exceptional for documents to be mistranslated or for meetings not to be announced. The sole aim of the proposal to adopt resolutions as a package was to reduce costs.

16. **Mr. Davidson** (United States of America) said that in view of the follow-up work to be done in connection with the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, it might be necessary to modify the amount of time allocated to certain agenda items. That issue should, however, be addressed with maximum flexibility.

17. **The Chairman** said that the amount of time spent on each item would depend, to a certain extent, on the volume of work to be done. Some items would be dealt with more expeditiously than others and, if it became apparent that additional discussion time was necessary, it would, wherever possible, be allocated. In that respect the Bureau would endeavour to be flexible.

18. **Mr. Christensen** (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union, agreed that the Committee's mandate was to move ahead with the implementation of the commitments entered into at Monterrey and Johannesburg and agreed that that fact should be reflected more closely in the Committee's programme of work. His group might find the rescheduling of the discussion on trade problematic since it had prepared a "holistic" statement linking trade and debt as had been done at Monterrey.

19. **Mr. Vallenilla** (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that he agreed with the proposals put forward.

20. **The Chairman** said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve its programme of work as contained in document A/C.2/57/L.1, as orally amended.

21. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.